17280.84 crores whereas loans issued* by them druing the year 1996-97 amounted to
Rs. 3781.40 crores.

(b) The details of number of customers benefited as represented by number of deposit accounts and borrowal accounts of all the 196 RRBs as on 31st March, 1997 are given below:—

(Number in lacs)

Total deposit accounts*	392.02
Total borrowal accounts*	116.42
Total customers benefited	508.44

(c) The details of loans issued* by RRBs during the last three years is as follows:—

(Rs. in crores)

1994-95	2316.45
1995-96	3267.79
1996-97	3781.40

Further, the position of amounts recovered* by RRBs is as under:—

(Rs. in crores)

Year July-June	Amount recovered	Percentage of recovery to demand
1993-94	1460.85	46.2
1994-95	1870.36	50.9
1995-96	2438.99	55.2

*Data Provisional

Negotiation for Appointment of Pre-shipment Assessment Agency

714. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are negotiating with Societe Generale De Surveillance. S.A., Geneva for appointing it as the pre-shipment assessment agency for imports into India; and

(b) if so, the reasons for doing so and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) Several complaints have been received from time to time about undervaluation and misclassification of imported goods leading to loss of revenue as also undue delays in cargo clearance at the ports and airports. With a view to overcoming these problems, Government have been consideriang several measures. Recently, the Directorate of Valuation has been set up to disseminate information on international prices and also monitor valuation practices in the Customs formations. One of the suggestions that came up for consideration in this regard was the use of pre-shipment inspection for ensuring correct classification and valuation of imported goods. It is in this context four pre-shipment companies made presentations on the role of pre-shipment inspection. No. decision has been taken in the matter.

Economic Growth Rate

715. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the country's economic growth rate for the present;

(b) the State having the highest economic growth in the country;

(c) the economic growth rate of each State; and

(d) whether it is a fact that the present growth rate of the country has slowed down again?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) As per the revised estimates released by SCO in July 1997, the growth rate of GDP during 1996-97 was 6.8%.